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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 006883

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/21/2015

TAGS: [PREL](#) [TU](#) [SY](#) [UN](#)

SUBJECT: TURKS CONCERNED WITH LACK OF AGREED VENUE FOR MEHLIS INTERROGATIONS

REF: A. ANKARA 6771

[¶](#)B. ANKARA 6706

Classified By: CDA Nancy McEldowney, Reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

[¶](#)1. (C) Turkish MFA DG for Middle East Oguz Celikkol informed Charge November 22 that Detlev Mehlis had not accepted UNDOF as a proposed site for interrogations. Celikkol had learned this from Syrian D/FM Mualllem at the opening session of the OIC Cairo conference on Iraq. Mehlis, Mualllem told Celikkol, has offered Geneva or Vienna. FM Gul may, Celikkol stated, phone UNSYG Annan to propose Ankara (UN offices) as a possible compromise. This would follow up on an idea UK Foreign Secretary Straw reportedly floated with Gul during an earlier conversation. In response to the Charge's expression of concern about the Turkish proposal of Ankara, Celikkol reasoned that the Syrians might be more comfortable having interrogations take place in their own region; the Turks, if necessary, could keep it under wraps, he stated.

[¶](#)2. (C) Charge pointed out that Syria needs to respond to Mehlis now; the clock is ticking. Both Geneva and Vienna are well-respected "UN" cities and neutral sites. Neither would cross the red lines Syrian President Asad had outlined to Gul during their Nov. 16 meeting in Damascus (i.e., not in Lebanon, not humiliating). The U.S. will follow Mehlis' lead; the Turks will only be able to claim Gul's trip to Damascus was a success once Syria ponies up on a venue. Presenting the Syrians with more options now would not be useful.

MCELDOWNEY